

STATE OF CONNECTICUT



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

James M. Thomas
Commissioner

Lieutenant Edwin S. Henion
Chief of Staff

February 8, 2011

Rep. Stephen Dargan, Co-Chairman
Sen. Joan Hartley, Co-Chairman
Public Safety and Security Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

SB 876 AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCHER TRAINING

The Department of Public Safety opposes this bill.

This proposed bill would exempt personnel at a public safety answering point from emergency medical dispatch training if such public safety answering point has another entity providing its emergency medical dispatch.

Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) does more than just provide pre-arrival instruction. It also includes protocols related to emergency response. Not all medical calls require a "hot" response, which is a response that requires immediate, critical response to a situation that is life threatening such as a heart attack. A response to such a 'hot', or life threatening may also mean different personnel (Basic Life Supports vs. Advanced Life Support), different equipment etc. A severely sprained or broken ankle would not require the same level of response.

One of the goals of EMD is to reduce the number of accidents related to emergency vehicles responding to calls. The protocols are reviewed with emergency medical providers who oversee the programs and provide input as to the type of response needed, the timing of response, the criticality of response and the equipment needed.

If for any reason a call is transferred to another agency for emergency medical dispatch or pre-arrival instruction and is lost, dropped or un-answered for any reason the originating PSAP would be able to provide this potentially life-saving service. Seconds can mean the difference between life and death any delays can be potentially life threatening.

Currently, the Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications OSET provides funding for emergency medical dispatch, emergency medical dispatch recertification, EMD protocols and card sets. Each Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) is eligible for PSAP training funds to

cover backfill, overtime and salaries. This required training is not an "unfunded mandate". In addition OSET allows for PSAPs to select any National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration approved vendor. The initial training is three days and recertification is either one day in the classroom or CD-based which can be done at their console. The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) offers "train- the- trainer" which allows for onsite training by PSAP personnel. This is not an undue burden on PSAPs, particularly in light of the benefits that are provided and in the interest of providing the best patient care and public safety.

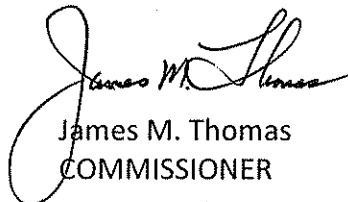
The credentialing of prospective Telecommunicators in Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) is a major component of State Telecommunicator certification as defined in Sec. 28-30-7(m). The Office of Education and Data Management (OEDM) has defined a training protocol intended to credential E-911 Telecommunicators to a standard that provides for the dispatcher to respond in the most efficient and effective way possible in any given situation. To this end, the certified Telecommunicator is held to a statewide standard, and his/her skills are transferable. If an individual is working at a Secondary PSAP, and takes a job at a Primary PSAP, the skill sets as defined in training and certification remain the same.

Without an increase in both personnel and technological updates, it would be impossible to track Telecommunicators who are certified to a lesser standard (those without EMD certification) if they transfer to another PSAP or work in multiple PSAPs. Without the inclusion of EMD as part of E-911 Telecommunicator certification, there would be the unacceptable potential of having someone fall through the cracks and not receive the training they need. This would of course lead to issues related to liability or negligence.

In the event that a PSAP requires backup or a reroute due to equipment failure, a move or any reason that may cause a PSAP to shutdown (large scale incident) it is in the best interest of public safety that all telecommunicators be equally trained so that they may seamlessly take over 9-1-1 calls. This will be particularly critical as the state moves forward with new technology and changes. The ability to take and respond to calls from other PSAPs at a moment's notice will be more important than ever and there won't be time to debate who has been trained in EMD and who hasn't.

EMD provides the best patient care, may reduce accidents, and may reduce cost by limiting the number of personnel and equipment needed on a scene. It is funded and provides the best training level that we can provide.

Sincerely,



James M. Thomas
COMMISSIONER